

THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

“CHRISTUS RESURREXIT, ALLELUIA!”

When we say “Gospel” - *good news!* - we mean nothing else than the Latin phrase above. Telling the news is the same as carrying the greeting: “Christ is risen: Praise God!” We are not Christians until we become, not mere receivers, but heralds of this news: *evangelists*.

“ALLELUIA!”

It means “Praise the Lord!” and it’s an invitation to come into the presence of God with our hearts on fire with joy. It can’t happen accidentally. It is the response of the people of God when he proves his love for them. To sing this jubilant word, we need to be blessed with a *divine* gift of joy - it can’t be bestowed by any human being, however kind. It’s not a word that greets a bit of good luck, or a piece of expected human success. It can only be used by someone who loves God, and who *knows* that the blessedness of this moment is a direct gift from the Father. To sing it on Easter Night belongs to those who took the ashes on their foreheads, and fasted with Jesus, and prayed and regenerated their generosity in Lent: who welcomed him to the Holy City on Palm Sunday, who took their place at the Last Supper, and who let the Servant Christ wash their feet, and feed them with his farewell gift, the Eucharist: things they could not understand then, but which now mean everything to them: people who struggled through the streets of Jerusalem to Calvary, and who watched as he gave up the Spirit: people who mourned for the dead Jesus on Holy Saturday. Theirs is the Paschal joy of God, as he raises his beloved Son to eternal life, so that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is at last made whole before our eyes.

Investing Our Lives

St Luke is the one who likes best the idea of *investing* in the promise of God. He knows that, of all there is to hope for, nothing will deliver except the Kingdom of God. So in the Third Gospel we are told over and again: “Get yourselves purses that don’t wear out! Put your treasure in the Kingdom; where a man’s treasure is, there will his heart be

also.” The practice of our faith is the tending of our investment. We recite day by day the words of the Lord’s promise to us, and watch over its coming with attentive and committed eyes. If new power to invest should come to us, we know where to take it, and quickly put it to work, so that the harvest will be abundant. Because the Kingdom is “not of this world,” any real investment we make in this world’s rewards will be wasted; not that Christianity fails to care for the world and its poor; in fact, the sharing we do with the poor is the clearest investment in the Kingdom, because Jesus said: *Blessed are the poor: the Kingdom of heaven is theirs!* But the world that is passing, the world that refuses God and crucifies Christ, robs the poor and refuses justice: that world must never receive any investment from us, because we are lessening our stake in the real future, the eternal harvest.

The Risen Grain

Jesus risen at Easter is the first-fruits of our harvest, and his greeting brings divine joy to those who have longed for his appearing. Those who have sown the seed generously, of whom it can be said *They went out full of tears, carrying the seed for the sowing*, will be able to recognise the source of Easter joy, and feel the surge of consolation from God that it brings. I’ve always treasured the sheer weariness of Easter Day in the Rectory. The body must feel like that when you’ve completed a marathon; but this is a course that involves the draining of the cup of suffering, and lies in the laying-down of life, and passes through the grave. It’s a spiritual marathon, which catches up and recapitulates everything we know of human experience: love, affection, betrayal, cruelty, rejection, condemnation, faithfulness, anguish, despair, the most craven weakness, the most utter nobility: degradation and holiness. There is nothing which doesn’t play its part in the story we pass through at Easter. In finding ourself here, we find Christ beside us: Lord of the living, Lord of the dead; Lord of creation,

Lord of life. *Alleluia!* May God bless you, and
all who are dear to you! *Fr Philip*